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HEADLINE: Germantown field upgrade facing a vote

BYLINE: By MIMI EUBANK Staff Writer

BODY:

Del. Michael Busch is getting closer to his field of dreams.

On Wednesday, the Annapolis Democrat and county Recreation and Parks official made his pitch to the county Board of Education for the renovation of the playing fields at Germantown Elementary School.

If the board gives its approval for the half-million dollar project by the end of this month, work will begin on the fields by November.

The only concern from the school board came from Vice President Paul Rudolph of Severna Park. The school raises money for its PTA by permitting overflow parking from Navy Stadium events on a section of the fields. Mr. Rudolph wondered if continued parking would damage the new work.

"I want to make sure we don't come back and say we're ruining the field by parking on it," Mr. Rudolph said.

Mr. Busch said the PTA has signed off on the plan to continue parking on the fields after the work is complete.

"Obviously (parking) can do some damage to the fields ... but at the same token, it raises a lot of money for the PTA," he said.

When the project is complete by spring, there will be five fields for soccer, lacrosse and field hockey, two little league baseball diamonds, a new basketball court and a storage and concession building.

The tennis courts beside the school will remain intact.

There are now only four fields at the school. In addition to adding one new field, the work will realign and upgrade the existing ones.

A paved walkway will also be woven into the 36-acre facility, adding a pathway for children walking to school, as

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well as for skaters and cyclists.

Mr. Busch, who said the new facility will resemble a "park-like setting," said the improvements will be a benefit to the school, the community and the recreation clubs who regularly use them.

"I think this is a win-win situation," he told the Board of Education.

Since the board owns the fields, the project will have to have its blessing before the work can proceed. The city has already pledged \$ 503,000 for the project _ \$ 375,000 of which came from state open space funds.

In addition, the city has agreed to maintain the site year-round. Pasadena contractors Harms and Associates will do the work.

Even though the project doesn't include a plan to add more parking at the facility, Germantown Principal Eleanor Harris said she has received no complaints from recreation groups about inadequate parking during game events.

"Everybody is really excited about this project," she said.

GRAPHIC: MAP CAPITAL GRAPHIC

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